

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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R 061015Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6693

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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DIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, LA

SUBJECT: NEW FARES AND NEW INTERNAL ROUTES FOR LAO AVIATION

REF USDAO LAOS IR 6 856 0010 76 (200345Z JAN 76), NOTAL

1. MINISTRY OF INFORMATION'S OFFICIAL DAILY BULLETIN FOR JULY 3 PUBLISHED ARTICLE ON "NEW AIRLINE RATES" FOR LAO AVIATION INTERNAL FLIGHTS. LOCAL NEWSPAPER VIENTIANE MAI, REPORTING ON SAME SUBJECT JULY 5, NOTED THAT FARES HAD BEEN RAISED BY 300 PER CENT (MORE IN SOME CASES). BOTH SOURCES BLAMED INCREASES ON RISE IN PRICES OF GASOLINE AND AIRPLANE PARTS. NEW FARE SCHEDULE MENTIONED FIVE NEW COMMERCIAL ROUTES: VIENTIANE-VIENGSAV, VIENTIANE-SAM NEUA, VIENTIANE-OUDOMSAY, VIENTIANE-SAYABOURY AND VIENTIANE-XIENG KHOUANG.

2. FOLLOWING IS FULL TEXT OF ARGICLE CARRIED IN DAILY BULLETIN: BEGIN QUOTE: CONSIDERING THE PRICE OF ACCESSORIES AND GASOLINE, CIVIL AVIATION ANNOUNCES NEW FARES:

VIENTIANE-LUANG-PRABANG: 2500 KIPS

LUANG-PRABANG-VIENGSAV: 2100 KIPS

VIENTIANE-VIENGSAV: 4600 KIPS

VIENTIANE-SAYABOURY: 1890 KIPS

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VIENTIANE-OUDOMSAY: 3360 KIPS

VIENTIANE-XIENG KHOUANG:	1890 KIPS
VIENTIANE-SAMNEUA:	3780 KIPS
VIENTIANE-THAKHEK:	3570 KIPS
VIENTIANE-SAVANNAKHET:	4200 KIPS
SAVANNAKHET-PAKSE:	1890 KIPS
VIENTIANE-PAKSE:	6090 KIPS

THESE FARES WILL GO INTO FORCE FROM NOW WITH REGARD TO THE ROUTES: VIENTIANE-LUANG-PRABANG, VIENTIANE-SAVANNAKHET, VIENTIANE-PAKSE, VIENTIANE-THAKHEK AND VIENTIANE-PAKSE. FLIGHTS WITH THE NEW FARES WILL BEGIN ON JULY 5, AS TO THE OTHER FOUR (SIC) ROUTES, INFORMATION WILL FURNISHED LATER. FOR OTHER DETAILS, PLEASE CALL OFFICE OF THE LAO AVIATION COMPANY, NO. 2, RUE PANGKHAM, TEL: 2094. END QUOTE

3. JULY 6 EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEE INQUIRED AT LAO AVIATION OFFICE ABOUT SCHEDULES FOR NEW ROUTES ANNOUNCED IN NEWSPAPER. AIR-LINE EMPLOYEE REPLIED THAT LAO AUTHORITIES ARE NOW SENDING TEAMS TO SAYABOURY, VIENGSA, SAM NEUA, XIENG KHOUANG AND TO BAN HOUET SAI (LAST-NAMED NOT MENTIONED IN NEWSPAPER ARTICLE) TO CHECK AIRPORT CONDITIONS, AND MAKE UP FUTURE SCHEDULES. AIRLINE EMPLOYEE DID NOT KNOW WHEN SCHEDULED FLIGHTS TO THESE TOWNS WOULD COMMENCE. MEANTIME, LAO AVIATION INTERNAL FLIGHTS TO LUANG-PRABANG CONTINUE ON TUESDAY, THURSDAY AND SATURDAY, AND FLIGHTS FROM VIENTIANE TO SAVANNAKHET AND PAKSE ARE STILL SCHEDULED ON MONDAY, WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY, AS OUTLINED REFTEL. STOP AT THAKHEK HAS BEEN ADDED TO SAVANNAKHET-PAKSE FLIGHTS. LAO AVIATION EMPLOYEE ADVISED THAT ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES SHOULD BE RECONFIRMED FOR EACH FLIGHT BECAUSE TIMES VARIED.

4. LAO AVIATION EMPLOYEE CONFIRMED REPORT EMBOFFS HAD HEARD OF A SPECIAL CHARTER FLIGHT (DC-4) TO BANGKOK ON THURSDAY, JULY 1. FLIGHT WAS APPARENTLY ARRANGED TO TAKE LARGE NUMBER OF FRENCH TEACHERS OUT OF VIENTIANE AT EXPIRATION OF THEIR OFFICIAL STAY IN LAOS. EMPLOYEE SAID SUCH "SPECIAL FLIGHTS" HAD TO BE ARRANGED THROUGH COOPERATION OF DIRECTORATE OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. EMPLOYEE SAID LAO AUTHORITIES WERE STUDYING PLANS TO START LAO AVIATION INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BANGKOK, HANOI AND HONG KONG, BUT THAT AIRLINE WAS NOT YET READY TO ANNOUNCE DEFINITE SCHEDULES AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUCH FLIGHTS.

5. COMMENT: WE CONTINUE TO HEAR RUMORS THAT LAO AVIATION WILL START FLYING TO BANGKOK IN JULY, BUT ARE STILL UNABLE TO CONFIRM THESE RUMORS. AS FOR INTERNAL FLIGHTS, NEW FARES JUST ANNOUNCED SHOULD HAVE EFFECT OF DRASTICALLY RESTRICTING PRIVATE AIR

TRAVEL BY ORDINARY LAO CITIZENS, WHO WILL NOT BE ABLE TO AFFORD NEW RATES. UP TO NOW, LAO INTERNAL FLIGHTS TO LUANG PRABANG, SAVANNAKHET, PAKSE AND THAKHEK HAVE APPARENTLY CARRIED QUITE A FEW ORDINARY LAO WHO WERE TRAVELING TO VISIT FAMILIES OR CHECK OUT JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND CONDITIONS IN MAJOR TOWNS OF LAOS. WITH ONE-WAY VIENTIANE-PAKSE FLIGHT RATE SET AT 6,090 KIP, THE MONTHLY SALARY OF MIDDLE-LEVEL LAO OFFICIAL, PRIVATE TRAVEL WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR MOST FAMILIES. LOCAL SHELL DIRECTOR CROSSMAN TOLD EMBOFF JULY 5 THAT SHELL HAS NOT RAISED PRICE OF AVIATION GASOLINE IT SELLS TO LAOS OVER LAST YEAR. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN NO RISE IN HARD CURRENCY PRICE OF GASOLINE, LPDR COULD, TECHNICALLY, POINT TO RECENT DEVALUATION OF KIP BY MORE THAN 300 PER CENT AS EVIDENCE OF "RISE" IN PRICE OF GASOLINE. END COMMENT.

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